



# Character Education Management in Resource-Limited Contexts: Evidence from Indonesian Rural Schools

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## ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the management of character quality reinforcement at SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla, a rural secondary school in Enrekang Regency, Indonesia. The research aims to explore how the functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling are applied in strengthening students' moral and ethical behavior. A qualitative descriptive design was employed, involving interviews with the principal, teachers, administrative staff, and students, complemented by observations and document analysis. Data were analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña's interactive model, which involves data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that character education was systematically planned by identifying moral priorities and integrating them into the school's vision, curriculum, and extracurricular activities. Organizationally, the school employed a participatory model that involved teachers, students, parents, and community members in maintaining a shared responsibility for character formation. Implementation occurred through moral integration in lessons, religious routines, and habitual practices supported by consistent teacher modeling. Evaluation and supervision were conducted through behavioral monitoring, documentation, and regular reflection meetings to ensure continuous improvement. The study concludes that effective character management in resource-limited schools depends on leadership commitment, collaborative culture, and contextual adaptation. This research contributes to educational management literature by demonstrating that even schools with limited facilities can institutionalize character education through participatory and value-based management practices, offering a replicable model for similar institutions in developing contexts.*

## INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping individuals who are intellectually capable, morally upright, and socially responsible. It is widely acknowledged as the primary driver of human resource development, which in turn determines a nation's competitiveness and progress ([Bratton et al., 2021](#); [Talan & Tyagi, 2020](#)). In the Indonesian context, education is not only a constitutional right but also a

moral obligation aimed at producing citizens who embody noble character, integrity, and responsibility in accordance with national and religious values ([Latif, 2025](#); [Wahyuni, 2024](#)).

Character education has therefore become a central pillar in Indonesia's national education agenda. It aims to develop learners' moral and ethical awareness, self-discipline, and social empathy, enabling them to adapt to the challenges of globalization while preserving local cultural and religious values ([Agus et al., 2021](#); [Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025](#)). [Lickona \(2012\)](#) defines character as the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, a triadic process through which individuals internalize moral values and translate them into behavior. This multidimensional concept highlights the importance of schools serving as moral communities that cultivate ethical awareness through their daily practices and institutional culture.

However, in many Indonesian schools, the implementation of character education remains inconsistent and fragmented. The effectiveness of such programs largely depends on the management system that supports their planning, organization, execution, and evaluation ([Haq et al., 2022](#); [Sakban & Sundawa, 2023](#)). In rural and resource-limited areas, such as SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla in Enrekang Regency, challenges are more pronounced due to limited infrastructure, insufficient teacher training, and the growing influence of social media and globalization, which often erode traditional values among students. These conditions underscore the necessity for a well-structured management system that reinforces character education, integrating all stakeholders to foster a sustainable culture of good character.

Several studies have explored the management and implementation of character education in Indonesian schools. [Sumar et al. \(2025\)](#) found that effective character management in SDN 7 Kota Barat, including structured planning, daily discipline routines, and collaborative involvement between teachers and parents, significantly improved students' discipline and moral awareness. Similarly, [Wasehudin et al. \(2024\)](#) highlighted that character education in SDIT Al-Izzah Banten was successfully reinforced through role modeling (*uswah hasanah*), habituation, and consistent moral supervision, demonstrating that teachers' exemplary behavior is essential for sustaining students' moral discipline. Meanwhile, [Sanjani \(2024\)](#) emphasized that integrating character education into school management practices in MTsN 3 Banyuwangi created an inclusive school culture that supported positive behavioral change through continuous evaluation and collaboration among teachers, students, and parents.

Beyond the Indonesian context, scholars such as [Syarnubi et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Ansori et al. \(2024\)](#) argue that character education should be systematically managed to ensure coherence between institutional policies and classroom practices. Effective character education management involves aligning leadership vision, curriculum integration, and community engagement to reinforce moral development as part of a holistic education approach. In this regard, the importance of reinforcement management is a process of strengthening desired behaviors through planned strategies and continuous monitoring ([Armstrong, 2022](#); [Zimmerman et al., 2022](#)). These perspectives support the view that managing character education is not merely about moral instruction but about building an institutional ecosystem that fosters ethical values, discipline, and civic responsibility among learners.

Therefore, this study explores the management of strengthening student character quality at SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla, Enrekang. It aims to identify (1) the forms of management used in reinforcing students' character quality, (2) the strategies applied in managing character education, and (3) the challenges encountered in this process. This study provides both theoretical and practical insights into how character education management can be effectively implemented in rural Indonesian contexts, contributing to the broader discourse on educational leadership, moral education, and school-based management.

## **METHODS**

### ***Research Design***

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, aiming to understand and describe the management of character quality reinforcement at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* in Enrekang Regency, Indonesia. The qualitative approach was chosen to capture the complexity of social and educational phenomena through naturalistic inquiry, thereby gaining in-depth insights into school management practices related to character education. Qualitative research is particularly appropriate when the goal

is to explore participants' experiences, perceptions, and meanings within a specific context ([Creswell & Creswell, 2017](#)).

### **Research Site and Participants**

The research was conducted at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla*, a rural secondary school located in Enrekang Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. This school was purposefully selected because it represents a *one-roof* model institution (covering both elementary and junior secondary levels) that faces unique challenges in educational management and character formation. The participants consisted of the school principal, teachers, and administrative staff who were directly involved in planning and implementing character education programs. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that the selected participants could provide rich and relevant data to support the study's objectives ([Robinson, 2023](#)).

### **Data Collection**

Data for this study were collected over two months, from April to May 2025, using three complementary techniques: interviews, observations, and document analysis. These methods were selected to obtain comprehensive and triangulated insights into the management of character education at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla*, Enrekang. The combination of these approaches allowed the researcher to understand both the formal structures of management and the lived experiences of teachers and students in their daily educational activities.

Semi-structured interviews were the primary method of data collection. The researcher conducted individual interviews with the school principal, four teachers, and two administrative staff members who were directly involved in planning and implementing character education programs. Additionally, two student representatives were interviewed to capture learners' perspectives on how character values are practiced and reinforced in the school environment. Each interview lasted approximately forty-five to sixty minutes and was conducted in a conversational format that encouraged participants to share their views openly and freely. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Observations were carried out in both formal and informal settings to capture the authentic integration of character education into school life. The researcher observed classroom teaching sessions, flag ceremonies, extracurricular activities, and student interactions during breaks. Observation notes were systematically recorded using a structured observation sheet aligned with the four management functions, planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. This process helped identify how teachers acted as role models, how school routines supported discipline and cooperation, and how the overall school culture reflected character values such as responsibility, respect, and integrity.

To complement interviews and observations, document analysis was conducted to examine written materials that reflected the school's management practices in character education. These documents included the school's work plans, activity reports, teacher performance evaluations, student behavior records, and policy documents on discipline and moral conduct. Analyzing these materials allowed the researcher to understand how formal policies were translated into daily practices and to validate the consistency between the school's stated vision and its implementation.

Together, these three methods provided a holistic understanding of how character quality reinforcement was managed and institutionalized within the school environment. The triangulation of data from different sources enhanced the depth and credibility of the findings, ensuring that the study accurately represented the reality of educational management practices at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla*.

### **Data Validation and Trustworthiness**

To ensure the credibility and validity of the collected data, several strategies were applied based on the framework proposed by Guba and Lincoln's Parallel Criteria ([Enworo, 2023](#)). Credibility was achieved through data triangulation, which involved cross-verifying information obtained from interviews, observations, and document analyses. By comparing data from these multiple sources, the researcher ensured that the findings reflected a consistent and accurate representation of the

phenomena studied. Triangulation also strengthened the internal validity of the research by minimizing potential researcher bias and subjectivity.

Another important validation procedure was member checking, conducted by returning the summarized interview transcripts and thematic interpretations to the participants for confirmation. This process enabled participants to verify the accuracy of their statements and clarify any potential misunderstandings. The researcher also engaged in peer debriefing with academic supervisors and fellow researchers throughout the analysis process. These discussions provided constructive feedback, helped refine interpretations, and contributed to the analytical rigor of the study.

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation were maintained during fieldwork to ensure a deep understanding of the school's management culture and its approach to character education. The researcher spent sufficient time in the field to establish trust with participants, observe recurring patterns of behavior, and comprehend the contextual dynamics that influence character education practices. Furthermore, an audit trail was maintained throughout the research process, documenting each stage of data collection, transcription, coding, and analysis. This documentation provided transparency and allowed for external review of the research procedures.

Collectively, these validation strategies enhanced the trustworthiness of the study by ensuring that the findings were credible, dependable, confirmable, and transferable. By adhering to these rigorous procedures, the research produced data that not only accurately represented the participants' experiences but also contributed meaningful and reliable insights into the management of character education in the context of rural Indonesian schools.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using the interactive model, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing ([Miles et al., 2014](#)). Data reduction involved organizing and simplifying raw data to focus on key themes related to the planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling stages of character management. Data display was conducted through matrices and thematic charts to visualize emerging patterns, while conclusion drawing involved synthesizing the findings to derive theoretical and practical insights. The analysis process was iterative, continuously moving between data and interpretation to ensure validity and reliability.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Postgraduate Program of the State Islamic University (UIN) Palopo. Participants were informed of the study's objectives and assured of confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation. All collected data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes.

## **RESULTS**

The findings of this study reveal that the management of character quality reinforcement at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* follows the four primary functions of management, planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. Each function contributes to the systematic effort of integrating character values into school culture, learning activities, and community relations.

### **Planning of Character Quality Reinforcement**

The findings indicate that the planning process for character quality reinforcement at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* was designed collaboratively and systematically, involving the principal, teachers, and administrative staff. The process began with identifying behavioral challenges among students, such as a lack of discipline, inconsistency in religious practice, and limited awareness of mutual respect. The school principal emphasized that effective character education must begin with a comprehensive needs assessment to understand students' moral conditions and environmental influences. As the principal stated:

*"Before we design any program, we always start with an evaluation of our students' character and daily behavior. We look at their discipline, respect for teachers, and cooperation in class. From there, we decide what kind of character values need to be strengthened."* (Principal, Interview, May 2025)

This reflective approach helped the school identify core character values that required reinforcement, namely, religious commitment, discipline, cooperation, and responsibility. Teachers reported that the principal encouraged them to align classroom activities with these identified values. One teacher explained:

*"Our lesson plans are not only about academic goals but also about moral aspects. For example, in group work, we emphasize teamwork and respect. During prayers, we teach responsibility and discipline."* (Teacher 1, Interview, May 2025)

The school's character education plan was integrated into its annual work plan (Rencana Kerja Sekolah), ensuring that character development became part of both the curriculum and the extracurricular agenda. Planning meetings were conducted at the beginning of each semester to determine specific activities, allocate resources, and assign responsibilities to each staff member. Another teacher described this process:

*"Every semester, we hold a coordination meeting to discuss the character education agenda. We plan school events such as religious activities, community service, and flag ceremonies — all of which have character goals."* (Teacher 2, Interview, May 2025)

The planning also involved setting measurable indicators to evaluate the success of character education programs. These indicators included students' punctuality, participation in religious activities, interpersonal behavior, and adherence to school rules and regulations. Documentation analysis confirmed that the school formulated specific objectives such as *"building a disciplined and responsible student culture"* and *"cultivating religious and moral awareness through daily practice."*

Importantly, the planning process emphasized the principle of integration, ensuring that character education was embedded across all aspects of school management, rather than being treated as an isolated initiative. The principal explained that this approach was intentional:

*"We don't want character education to be just a separate subject. It has to be part of everything we do, from how teachers teach, how students behave, to how we manage the school environment."* (Principal, Interview, May 2025)

Furthermore, collaboration with parents and the local community was considered a vital component of the planning stage. The school regularly invited parents to participate in *parent-teacher meetings*, where discussions focused on students' moral development and the support they received at home. A homeroom teacher emphasized:

*"We also talk with parents about how they can continue the same values at home. It's important that what we teach here is supported by the family."* (Teacher 3, Interview, May 2025)

Through these collaborative and well-structured planning efforts, *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* successfully established a shared vision for character education. The school's planning system demonstrated not only administrative preparation but also a moral commitment to nurturing students who are disciplined, responsible, and spiritually grounded.

### **Organizing Character Education Activities**

The results show that the organization of character education activities at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* was structured collaboratively under the leadership of the principal. The management system adopted a participatory approach in which every stakeholder, including teachers, administrative staff, students, and parents had a defined role in realizing the goals of character education. The principal emphasized that the success of character education depends on shared responsibility among all members of the school community. As he explained:

*"We can't rely on one or two teachers. Everyone here, from the homeroom teacher to the administrative staff, has to be involved in guiding the students. It's teamwork." (Principal, Interview, May 2025)*

The school developed an internal structure to manage its character education programs. At the top level, the principal coordinated and supervised the entire process, while teachers were responsible for integrating moral values into learning activities and serving as role models in behavior. Each class had a homeroom teacher (*wali kelas*) assigned to monitor students' moral development, communicate with parents, and manage classroom discipline. A teacher stated:

*"As a homeroom teacher, I don't just handle academic matters. I also monitor students' behavior, remind them about discipline, and work closely with parents if there are any problems." (Teacher 2, Interview, May 2025)*

The school also formed a character development team consisting of teachers, student organization leaders, and extracurricular supervisors. This team planned and coordinated programs, including *religious assemblies, student discipline campaigns, and environmental care projects*. The team met regularly to review ongoing activities and discuss emerging behavioral issues among students. One teacher explained:

*"We usually hold meetings to evaluate the activities, what went well and what didn't. For example, after the Friday prayer program or class cleaning activities, we discuss how students responded and what needs improvement." (Teacher 1, Interview, May 2025)*

Students also played an active role in organizing character programs through their involvement in the student council (OSIS) and various extracurricular clubs. They were encouraged to take on leadership roles, organize peer-support programs, and serve as role models for others. According to the student council leader:

*"Our job is to remind our friends about discipline and to set an example. During ceremonies or community service, we make sure everyone participates and behaves properly." (Student Leader, Interview, May 2025)*

Communication and coordination were key elements in the organizational process. Regular coordination meetings were held between the principal and teachers to evaluate progress, share best practices, and strengthen teamwork. The principal maintained open communication channels, allowing teachers to express challenges they faced in implementing character-related programs. One teacher highlighted this collaborative environment:

*"Our headmaster always listens to our input. If we have difficulties with certain students or need support for an activity, he responds quickly. That helps a lot." (Teacher 3, Interview, May 2025)*

Furthermore, the school maintained close collaboration with parents and community leaders to ensure that character formation continued beyond the school environment. Parents were invited to participate in school events and were informed regularly about their children's moral progress. In some cases, the school involved religious and community figures in special events to strengthen students' social and spiritual awareness. The administrative staff noted:

*"Parents and the community are part of our activities. For example, when we hold community service or religious events, they often join and support us. It makes the students feel that these values matter." (Administrative Staff, Interview, May 2025)*

This well-organized and collaborative system created a cohesive structure in which all members of the school community contributed to reinforcing students' character. Each role was clearly defined,

communication was consistently maintained, and mutual support among teachers, students, and parents ensured that character education management was effectively implemented on an institutional scale.

### **Implementation of Character Education Programs**

The findings reveal that the implementation of character education programs at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* was carried out through an integrated approach that combined curricular, extracurricular, and habitual activities. Teachers, as the main agents of implementation, played a central role in embedding moral values in both academic instruction and everyday school interactions. Character education was not treated as a standalone subject, but rather was incorporated into all learning areas and daily routines.

During classroom instruction, teachers intentionally linked learning content with moral and ethical messages. Values such as honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and respect were introduced within the context of lesson activities. A social studies teacher explained how she integrated these values into her teaching process:

*"When I teach about community and social life, I always connect it to how students should behave in society, being honest, responsible, and cooperative. It's not only about theory; it's about real behavior."* (Teacher 1, Interview, May 2025)

Teachers also emphasized discipline and respect as core aspects of character education. Observations showed that before starting lessons, students greeted the teacher, recited short prayers, and checked class cleanliness as part of their daily routine. A mathematics teacher remarked:

*"We train students to be disciplined and orderly. Before the class begins, they must prepare their books, clean the desks, and pray together. It teaches them to be responsible for their surroundings."* (Teacher 2, Interview, May 2025)

Extracurricular programs provided additional platforms for developing practical character. Activities such as *scouting (Pramuka)*, *Friday prayer gatherings*, *cleanliness campaigns*, and *social service projects* encouraged students to apply the values they learned in real-life situations. The scout leader mentioned:

*"In scouting activities, we focus on cooperation, leadership, and discipline. For example, when we do camping or outdoor activities, students learn to be responsible and care for each other."* (Teacher 3, Interview, May 2025)

Religious activities were also a major component of character education implementation. Every morning, students participated in short prayers, Quranic recitations, and religious reflections before classes began. Every Friday, the school conducted *pengajian* (Quran study sessions) and *Friday prayers* for male students, while female students attended moral discussions led by teachers. According to the principal:

*"We try to make religious values part of daily practice. Students are used to praying before and after class, reading the Quran, and showing respect to teachers and friends."* (Principal, Interview, May 2025)

In addition to structured programs, habitual practices were developed to cultivate consistent moral behavior. Students were trained to greet teachers and guests politely, use respectful language, and take responsibility for maintaining a clean school environment. Teachers consistently modeled these behaviors, reinforcing the idea that character education must begin with setting a good example. An English teacher explained:

*"We can't just tell students to be polite or disciplined; we must show them. When teachers arrive on time, speak respectfully, and keep promises, students learn by seeing." (Teacher 4, Interview, May 2025)*

Observations during flag ceremonies also demonstrated that the school used collective routines to build national pride, respect, and discipline. Students lined up neatly, sang the national anthem, and listened to the principal's moral messages that highlighted themes such as honesty, responsibility, and perseverance. Documentation from the school indicated that these ceremonies were planned on a weekly basis as part of the moral education agenda.

The school also implemented a peer mentoring system, where older students guided younger ones in behavior and study habits. This informal mentoring helped strengthen students' sense of empathy and responsibility toward others. One student explained:

*"The older students help remind us about discipline and how to behave properly. It's easier to learn from friends who set a good example." (Student, Interview, May 2025)*

Overall, the implementation of character education at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* was comprehensive and consistent across all school activities. It reflected a collective commitment among teachers, students, and administrators to transform moral values into daily habits. The school's continuous integration of religious, social, and disciplinary values into every aspect of learning created a positive school culture that supported the holistic development of students' character.

### ***Controlling and Evaluation***

The findings indicate that the controlling and evaluation process in managing character education at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* was conducted systematically through continuous monitoring, assessment, and feedback. The principal and teachers played a central role in ensuring that all character development activities were carried out in accordance with the planned objectives. Evaluation was conducted not only to assess student behavior but also to improve the overall effectiveness of the school's character education programs.

The principal stated that monitoring was an integral part of daily school management. He personally observed student behavior during flag ceremonies, class hours, and extracurricular activities to ensure that students were consistently practicing the intended values. As he explained:

*"Supervision is part of our routine. I observe students during ceremonies and classes, and I also discuss students' discipline and attitudes with teachers. We need to know if our programs are working or not." (Principal, Interview, May 2025)*

Teachers also conducted ongoing observations and assessments of students' moral development. These observations focused on aspects such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and respect. Teachers maintained behavioral records and used them as references during meetings and parent-teacher discussions. A homeroom teacher described this practice as follows:

*"We have a behavior logbook where we note both positive and negative actions. If a student is late, disrespectful, or helpful to others, we document the incident. Later, we discuss these notes in meetings and use them to give feedback." (Teacher 2, Interview, May 2025)*

In addition to classroom observations, monthly evaluation meetings were held to review student progress and program outcomes. During these meetings, teachers discussed emerging behavioral issues, shared experiences, and proposed solutions to address them. Documentation analysis revealed that these meetings also served as forums for identifying exemplary students who consistently demonstrated good character. A teacher explained:

*"At the end of each month, we gather to evaluate the students' behavior. We talk about who has shown improvement and who needs guidance. From there, we plan follow-up actions." (Teacher 3, Interview, May 2025)*

Positive reinforcement was also used as part of the evaluation system. Students who consistently demonstrated good behavior, such as punctuality, honesty, and cooperation received verbal praise, certificates, or recognition during school assemblies. This approach helped strengthen students' motivation to behave positively. According to the student council leader:

*"When someone behaves well, like helping others or showing discipline, the teachers announce it in front of everyone. It makes us proud and motivates others to do the same." (Student Leader, Interview, May 2025)*

For students who displayed behavioral problems, the school applied a corrective and supportive approach. Teachers provided counseling, moral guidance, and sometimes home visits to involve parents in addressing persistent issues. The school preferred educational interventions over punishment, focusing on personal reflection and behavior correction. The guidance counselor stated:

*"When students make mistakes, we don't punish them harshly. We talk to them, ask them to reflect, and sometimes involve their parents. We want them to understand what they did wrong and improve." (Guidance Counselor, Interview, May 2025)*

Documentation also revealed that the school conducted periodic evaluations of its character education programs at the institutional level. These evaluations were included in the school's annual performance report (*Laporan Kinerja Sekolah*), which outlined achievements, challenges, and improvement plans. The principal highlighted that these reports were important for maintaining accountability and ensuring continuous improvement:

*"We always evaluate our character programs at the end of the year. We look at what has been achieved and what still needs attention. This helps us plan better for the next year." (Principal, Interview, May 2025)*

Overall, the controlling and evaluation process at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* demonstrated a consistent and reflective management cycle. The combination of daily supervision, behavioral documentation, and formal evaluation meetings enabled the school to sustain its character education efforts effectively. This systematic approach ensured that character development was continuously monitored, reinforced, and refined based on real behavioral outcomes observed among students.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study reveal that the management of character quality reinforcement at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* was implemented comprehensively through a structured process encompassing planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation. The planning process demonstrated a deliberate effort to align character education with the school's vision and mission, focusing on values such as discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and religious devotion. This systematic planning aligns with the conception of management planning as a process of determining objectives and selecting appropriate actions to achieve them ([Hamid et al., 2025](#); [Suardin et al., 2023](#)). The principal and teachers collaboratively identified behavioral challenges and set realistic moral goals, ensuring that character formation was embedded in both academic and non-academic programs. Such an approach also supports a relevant research perspective that value-based planning allows schools to establish coherence between moral objectives and institutional direction, thus integrating character formation into the very foundation of school management ([Cahyanto et al., 2025](#); [Surahman & Nayla, 2025](#)).

These results are consistent with previous studies that found schools with explicitly included moral objectives in their annual work plans tend to achieve more significant behavioral improvements among students ([Almazroui, 2023](#); [Sumar et al., 2025](#)). Similarly, relevant research has reported that

collaborative planning among principals and teachers enhances a shared sense of ownership, leading to the more sustainable implementation of moral programs ([Meyer et al., 2023](#); [Wasehudin et al., 2024](#)). The participatory process observed at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* reinforces these earlier findings, suggesting that when all stakeholders are involved from the beginning, character education becomes not only an administrative task but also a moral commitment shared by the entire school community.

The organization of character education at the school was equally systematic, characterized by clear role distribution, collaboration, and shared responsibility among all stakeholders. The principal acted as a coordinator, ensuring that every teacher, staff member, and student understood their part in nurturing students' moral development. It reflects a management principle that an effective organization requires a well-defined division of labor and unity of direction toward common goals ([Bhanje, 2023](#)). It also corresponds with participatory management in education, emphasizing that collective engagement and cooperation among stakeholders are key to the success of school-based programs ([Liu, 2021](#); [Syah et al., 2024](#)). The collaborative nature of organizational practices at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla*, which included coordination meetings, communication with parents, and community participation, illustrates how leadership and teamwork are essential in sustaining moral formation efforts within the school.

Empirical evidence from previous studies also supports the value of collaborative organization in promoting effective character education. Relevant research has observed that schools with well-established internal coordination and strong cooperation among teachers and students develop a more consistent moral climate and increased student accountability ([Sanjani, 2024](#); [Supriatna et al., 2024](#)). Similarly, another study emphasized that schools with clearly defined moral frameworks, supported by shared leadership, produce more cohesive value-based environments ([Syarnubi et al., 2021](#); [Thien et al., 2022](#)). The results from *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* reaffirm these findings, showing that inclusive and cooperative management systems create an ecosystem where moral values are collectively upheld and practiced by all members of the school community.

In terms of implementation, the study found that character education at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* was integrated into every aspect of school life, combining academic instruction, extracurricular activities, and habitual practices. Teachers played a crucial role as moral exemplars, embedding ethical values in lessons and modeling positive behavior in daily interactions. This practice aligns closely with the theory of moral education, which underscores the unity of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action as the essence of character formation ([Lickona, 2012](#); [Pike et al., 2021](#)). The consistent modeling of virtues such as honesty, respect, and responsibility also reflects social learning theory, which posits that individuals learn through observation and imitation of role models within their environment ([Rumjaun & Narod, 2020](#); [Zhou et al., 2024](#)). The school's use of daily rituals, prayers, and collective routines demonstrates how moral education becomes meaningful when practiced as part of students' lived experiences rather than taught as abstract principles.

These findings align with several previous studies, which have demonstrated that character education embedded in both curricular and extracurricular contexts significantly enhances students' internalization of moral values ([Ansori et al., 2024](#)). Likewise, another research noted that when teachers act consistently as role models, students develop greater empathy, discipline, and a stronger sense of responsibility ([Arto & Wakhudin, 2021](#); [Tiara Ramadhani et al., 2024](#)). The consistency of implementation at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* thus reinforces the idea that character development must be continuous and embedded in daily activities rather than sporadic or ceremonial. By aligning behavior, instruction, and school culture, the institution effectively transformed moral education into a living practice that had a holistic influence on students.

The process of controlling and evaluating character education at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* was conducted through continuous supervision, behavioral documentation, and reflection. The principal and teachers monitored student behavior regularly and used monthly meetings to review progress and plan corrective actions. This system corresponds to the definition of control as the function of ensuring that activities conform to established plans and standards ([Terry, 2015](#)), as well as an assertion that effective supervision helps maintain consistency between goals and results ([Hepriyanti et al., 2023](#)). Moreover, the school's emphasis on constructive feedback and supportive intervention aligns with the model of educational supervision, which views evaluation as a formative process for continuous improvement rather than punitive correction ([Rokhman et al., 2024](#)).

Previous research supports the crucial role of evaluation in sustaining character education programs, demonstrating that schools that apply continuous behavioral assessments and feedback mechanisms experience more consistent improvements in student conduct ([Bradshaw et al., 2021](#); [Poulou et al., 2023](#)). Another research also found that reflection-based evaluation encourages teachers to modify their approaches and helps students internalize values more effectively ([Guo, 2022](#); [Utari et al., 2025](#)). The findings from *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* confirm that regular monitoring, documentation, and positive reinforcement, such as recognition for exemplary behavior, are effective means of strengthening moral discipline and sustaining students' motivation to act ethically.

Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that the management of character quality reinforcement at *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* embodies an integrative and participatory model of educational management. The alignment between leadership vision, teacher engagement, and community support creates a cohesive system where character education is not only a formal program but a cultural practice. This finding makes a significant contribution to the field of educational management by demonstrating how classical management principles, planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling can be effectively applied to moral and value-based education in Indonesian secondary schools.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on a rural and SMPN Satu Atap context, which has rarely been examined in previous studies. Unlike urban schools with greater resources, *SMPN 8 Satu Atap Alla* demonstrates that moral education can be successfully institutionalized even with limited facilities, provided there is strong leadership commitment and participatory management. The study offers a distinctive contribution by illustrating that effective character management depends not on structural resources but on the alignment of moral vision, institutional culture, and collective action. This finding extends the discourse on value-based educational leadership and provides a practical model for implementing character education management in resource-constrained environments, such as those found in Indonesia and other developing regions.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that effective character quality reinforcement in schools requires a management system that integrates planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation into a coherent and participatory framework. The success of character education depends on leadership that embodies moral vision, teacher collaboration, and community involvement that supports continuous moral practice. The findings underscore that even in rural and resource-limited settings, strong managerial commitment and collective participation can transform character education from a policy directive into a lived culture of ethical behavior. It highlights the central role of educational management in achieving administrative efficiency, as well as in cultivating students' moral integrity and social responsibility.

The implications of this research extend to policymakers, educators, and future researchers. School leaders should prioritize value-based management by aligning institutional goals with moral outcomes, while teachers must act as consistent role models in every learning activity. Collaborative partnerships between schools, parents, and communities should be strengthened to sustain moral development beyond the classroom. Future research is recommended to explore comparative studies between rural and urban schools, focusing on how contextual differences influence the management of character education. Expanding this line of inquiry could enrich the understanding of how moral values can be effectively institutionalized across diverse educational settings in Indonesia and beyond.

## ***Funding and Conflicts of Interest***

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